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LEGAL AID BOARD

Somalia - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Tuesday 14 November 2023

Information on Al Shabaab including: Kidnappings in May 2022;

A report issued in September 2022 by the *United Nations Security Council* reviewing the period from 7 May to 23 August 2022 states that:

“From 7 to 31 May, the country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children in armed conflict verified 153 grave violations against 151 children (135 boys and 16 girls). A total of 72 children were victims of killing and maiming, 21 were abducted and 17 were subjected to rape and other forms of sexual violence. Attacks on two schools were also verified. Of the violations, 71 (46 per cent) were attributed to Al-Shabaab, 44 (29 per cent) to the federal and state armed forces, 32 (21 per cent) to unknown armed elements, 3 (2 per cent) to clan militia and 3 (2 per cent) to Ahl alSunna wal-Jama'a” (United Nations Security Council (1 September 2022) *Situation in Somalia: Report of the Secretary-General (September 2022)*, p.10).

In August 2022 the *United Nations Human Rights Council* commenting on events from 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 states that:

“Girls continue to face additional obstacles, such as early marriages, especially in areas controlled by Al-Shabaab, where the group recruits students as fighters and abducts girls and young women...” (United Nations Human Rights Council (19 August 2022) *Situation of human rights in Somalia, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia*, p.13).

In June 2022 the *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* states that:

“Children as young as 8 years of age are recruited or abducted by armed groups and some by government forces, for use in combat, and that girls are sexually abused, subjected to forced marriage and recruited to do household chores and to serve as spies” (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (9 June 2022) *Committee on the Rights of the Child: Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia*, p.18).

A report issued in May 2022 by *African Arguments* states that:

“Once recruited - forcibly or otherwise - al-Shabaab uses vulnerable children for a variety of combat and non-combat operations” (African Arguments (24 May 2022) *Somalia: To Counter Al-Shabaab, New Govt Must Do Something for the Kids*, p.2).

In May 2022 the *International Federation of Red Cross And Red Crescent Societies* states that:

“Constant threats from militant attacks, abduction, landmines and violent crime remain extant” (International Federation of Red Cross And Red Crescent Societies (20 May 2022) *Somalia | Hunger Crisis 2021-2022 - Appeal No: MDRSO011 - Operational Strategy (18 July 2021 to 31 July 2023)*, p.5). .

Presence in Afgoye/South East region

A publication issued in October 2023 by the *United Nations Security Council* points out that:

“Activities by Somali authorities to counter Al-Shabaab continued in central and southern Somalia throughout the reporting period” (United Nations Security Council (13 October 2023) *Situation in Somalia, Report of the Secretary-General*, p.3).

Shabelle Media Network in October 2023 states that:

“The Turkish-trained special police [Haram'ad] conducted a security operation in the southern town of Afgoye, which lies 30 kilometers west of Mogadishu. The officials said the police targeted houses suspected to be Al-Shabaab hideouts, where a number of alleged militants have been rounded up during the sweep in the strategic city...In the past few days, the government forces stepped up operations against Al-Shabaab as part of wider offensive aimed at eliminating the militants from the whole country. Afgoye which is located in Lower Shabelle region is key to the security of Mogadishu as it is on a highway that connects the capital to Al-Shabaab controlled areas in southern Somalia”(Shabelle Media Network (3 October 2023) *Al-Shabaab Suspected Nabbed in Security Operation*).

A report issued in October 2023 by the *United Nations Security Council* states that:

“...Al-Shabaab’s ability to exploit geographical seams found across the Somali National Army’s disposition, assimilate into local communities during tactical retreats and conduct probing counter-attacks against government forces, pro-government militia and forward operating bases suggests that Al-Shabaab remains resilient, adaptable and deadly. Despite being pushed from large areas of central Somalia, the group has managed to increase its pace of operations, including complex attacks” (United Nations Security Council (2 October 2023) *Letter dated 29 September 2023 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Al-Shabaab addressed to the President of the Security Council*, p.7).

References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. All COI Query Responses are compiled in line with the Common EU Guidelines (2008) and the EUAA Report Methodology (2023). This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. Please refer to all documents cited.

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